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No. 22.

LAURA.

BY LOUISE SCHEPLER.

Laura's voice is low and gentle,
Like the song-bird's free,
Every word and every accent
Music unto me.
Laura's eyes are like the color
Of the heavens above,
And her smile so clear and truthful—
Laura is my love.

You may sing of radiant beauty,
Dark eyes' witchery,
But I never have seen a maiden
Half so fair to me
As my dainty blue-eyed darling,
Flitting like a dove
Round my arm-chair, books and table—
Laura is my love.

DAVY CROCKETT ON THE TRACK;

OR,
The Cave of the Counterfeiters.

BY FRANK CARROLL.

AUTHOR OF "THE HEIR OF GLENDALE,"
"JOHN FARMER'S PLOT," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE SHOOTING MATCH.

Near a village in Western Tennessee, some twenty miles distant from the Mississippi river, a large assemblage of men were gathered. Nor was the scene ungraced by representatives of the fair sex, many of whom softened by their presence the rather rude crowd of backwood heroes who formed the assemblage.

It was about the first of September, and the warmth of the summer air was already tempered by a cool breeze from the north, presymptory of the approach of the season of frost.

Most of the dwellers in the neighborhood were of the sturdy, well-to-do class, and the most of these being small, rustic structures of wood. In their midst stood the inevitable tavern, a frame building rather larger than the others. A blacksmith shop, and a country store, in which everything might be purchased "from a needle to an anchor," "dry-goods, groceries, hardware, and etceteras" innumerable, comprised the business enterprises of the place.

The inhabitants were mostly small farmers, with a sprinkling of wood-choppers, hunters, and those engaged in other avocations. The country around was a sparsely settled farming district, in which but contracted clearings broke the continuity of the primeval woodland, which yet occupied the greater portion of the region.

The wild beasts that had disputed possession with the Indians were not yet exterminated by his civilized successor, and the deer which roamed the woods had sturdy companionship in the bears, and dangerous enemies in the wild-cats, wolves and panthers, which yet made the forest their home.

That monarch of the deer tribe, the elk, still roamed in safety through these backwoods, but little disturbed by the rifle of the adventurous hunter. Indeed, but a single evidence of the near approach of civilization marked the forest depths. The bee, that pioneer of the pale-faced invader, on which the Indians look with dread as the sure precursor of the white man, was numerous in those woods, and many of the hollow trees were filled with a nectar gathered from generations of flowers by these industrious honey-seekers.

Most of the assembled people carried their rifles, that necessary companion of the pioneer, and the constant quick reports from the centre of the crowd showed that these weapons were being brought into practical employment.

It was, in fact, a shooting-match, an occasion of frequent recurrence in these settlements, that had brought the assemblage together, collected not only from the villages, but from the farms for miles around, and from isolated huts buried in the depths of the forest.

These men, born almost rifle in hand, and accustomed to a life in which existence often depended on a sure eye and a quick finger at the trigger, were of a different type from what we would call good marksmen here in the east. They would have laughed to scorn our targets, and have declined to empty their rifles in competition with our crack shots.

To hit a panther in the eye, when crouched in readiness to leap, or to strike the bald eagle with a rifle-ball in his lofty flight overhead, were feats more in their vein; and they were accustomed to boast of their deeds in a hyperbolic strain that was not unjustified by the facts.

At this period of the year, when the leaves which had been fattening on the rich greenness of the alluvial soil, were in prime condition, it was usual to dispose of them in this manner, offering them to be shot for, in matches fired for stated occasions and localities.

These matches were kept up not only all day, but often all night, candles replacing the lost light of the sun. Everything was shot for, dry-goods, shoes, groceries, &c., the women at home setting little store by anything brought outright by their good man, and not won by his skill with the rifle. But if the article had cost him ten times its value, he could count on being forgiven if he had won it by a bullet.

Each man brought his own target, a piece of board with a small bit of paper in the centre. On this paper were made three circles, at one-half, three-quarters, and one inch from the centre. Any shot

more than an inch from the centre was not counted. The usual shooting distance was sixty yards with a rest, or forty yards off-hand, which latter mode was much preferred by these skilled marksmen.

In shooting for cattle, each man put up twenty-five cents for a shot, the price of a fat ox being about twenty dollars. There were six prizes. The best shot got the hide and tallow, which was considered the first choice. The second and third best got the two hind-quarters, the fourth and fifth the two fore-quarters, and the sixth, the lead which had been shot into the tree against which the targets rested.

These few particulars are given in order to render more intelligible the mode of conducting the matches, at one of which the reader has just been introduced.

The fair attendants upon these masculine sports were of a different stamp from their fashionable sisters of the city. Red-cheeked, robust, well-formed girls, free in their movements, hearty in their tones, conventionalities had never robbed them of the grace of nature, nor fashion tortured their frames out of all semblance to the line of beauty.

But our present concern is with but one of these daughters of the forest, the fairest and most refined in appearance of them all. Apart from the main body of the people stood two persons, a young man and the maiden to whom we have alluded, deeply engaged in conversation.

She was young and beautiful, possessing one of those fair complexions which the sun seems unable to embrown. A soft blue eye, which yet did not lack the fire of a resolute will, a rosy hue in her cheeks that rivalled the crimson of her lips, and golden hair that flowed freely over her shoulders, formed a combination that would have been thought beautiful in any locality.

She was attired, like the others, in the plainest material, but it lacked not artistic ornament, while her fine form swayed with queenly grace.

Her companion was a handsome, athletic youth, tall, graceful and muscular, his broad shoulders and sturdy limbs betokening a strength which did not appear evident on a first glance at his form.

They were conversing in low and earnest tones, as if desirous not to be overheard. But words were not necessary to show the relation between them. There was a warm light in the glance she turned upon him, a rich affection in his responsive smile that would have satisfied any one skilled in affairs of the heart that he gazed upon declared lovers.

"Look around quietly," she said, in low, melodious tones. "The man with the heavy black beard, on the edge of the crowd. Don't let him notice you looking. He has his eyes fixed on us."

"And why have not I as much warrant to fix my eyes on him?"

"Don't, Rob. I am dreadfully afraid of him. I would not have him know for the world that we are talking about him."

"He is a stranger to me. Why do you fear him? Has he dared to annoy you?"

"I do not know who he is. He has called several times at our house, pretending to have business with my father, and has met me more than once in the road."

"He has not insulted you?" asked Rob, fiercely.

"No, no. Only his attentions are annoying. I cannot bear the man. He is very disagreeable to me."

"You are not telling me all, Maggie," said her lover.

"You will not do anything violent?"

"No, I will be as meek as a lamb. What else is there?"

"He went so far as to make me a declaration of love. But you can judge what answer I gave him."

"A short one, I hope?"

"Too short for his taste. I want you to avoid him, Rob. His eyes were fixed on you just now with a very sinister look."

"He had better avoid me if he knows when he is well off. He has the face of a villain. Let him look out how he crosses my path."

"Are you not going to take your chance in the match?" she asked, anxiously.

"Yes. Wish me good luck, Maggie, and I shall be sure to win."

Entering the throng he pressed forward toward the centre of the mass, where a wide space stood vacant between the marksmen and the trees. One by one the riflemen stepped up, discharged their weapons, and gave place to others.

Each, however, fired only at his own target. These were all in possession of the judges, and were put up successively, as the owners called for them.

"Put up my board!" cried Rob, in a cheerful tone as he stepped into the vacant place.

All pressed forward with interest to observe his shots, as he was known to be very skillful.

"What have I got to beat?" he asked of those near by.

"You've got to touch the centre to win the hide," said a bystander. "It has been nipped already."

"Who by?"

"By the fellow there with the black beard. I don't know who he is, but he's a prime shot."

Rob looked round, and saw that the man alluded to was the same one who had just before been pointed out to him.

A feeling of jealous rivalry sprang up in his mind as he saw him. He determined that this stranger should not surpass him in skill, and he raised his muscles into iron rigidity as he stepped into position and faced the target that hung on the tree, forty yards distant.

He held the rifle pointing to the ground. With eye firmly fixed on the black spot in the centre of the target he slowly raised the weapon to the level, his eye ranging along the sights. For an instant he stood thus, as if carved out of marble, then the rifle belched forth its flaming message, and the bullet sped across the intervening space.

The judges instantly examined the target, crying out—

"Just touched the centre. It is a tie shot with the best shot scored before."

"You've got to do a little better than that if you want to carry off the prize," said a voice at his elbow, as he was loading for his second shot.

He looked round and saw beside him his black-bearded rival.

A slight frown marked his brow as he answered—

"I will beat your shot, or burst my barrel."

"Do your best then. I have two chances left, and haven't let myself out yet."

Disdaining a reply, Rob raised the rifle to his eye and fired again. But despite himself his nerves had been somewhat shaken by his colloquy with his rival, and the ball struck wide of the centre, just coming within the outer circle. His third shot was little better, cutting the half-inch circle.

A shout rose from the lookers-on as these shots were announced. The promise of his first shot had been so poorly followed up, and they had expected so much better from him, that there was not only disappointment but a shade of derision in their cry. The latter feeling was strongly displayed in a voice near him, which he

clearly recognized as that of his would-be rival.

If it was intended to still further excite him, it had the opposite effect. His lip curled with resolution, and a stern light came into his eyes as he again stepped into position.

Now every nerve was steady, every muscle as rigid as steel. His aim was taken with unusual care, his eye ranging for several seconds along the barrel before the trigger was touched.

On the report the judges, who stood on each side of the target, sprang forward. After a momentary examination, they cried out—

"That's the champion shot. A shade to the left, and it would have gone through the bull's eye. That's the bullet will take the hide."

A shout, now of triumph, rose from the mass. The marksmen was a favorite with them, and they rejoiced in the success of their own comrade over a stranger.

"I've got two shots yet, my friend," said the voice at his elbow. "The hide isn't yours yet."

"And I have one," said Rob, as he walked away. "I will keep it till I see what your brag comes to."

The shooting continued with unabated vigor as our friend left the mass and sought his former companion, who awaited him just outside the throng.

"No you are champion?" he said.

"That is the verdict of the judges," he replied, somewhat proudly. "I have left a bullet there which will try the best of them to match. I did not gain much credit, though, by two of my shots."

"Yes. How was it?"

"It came from your black-faced friend. I got a little angry at something he said, and grew a trifle nervous in consequence."

"Do you know that he accented me again after you left me?"

"No. What did he say to you?"

"He asked for my answer to his snit, with as much effrontery as if I had not already answered him."

"And you repeated your former answer?"

"In much stronger terms. I gave him plainly to understand that I would prefer in the future to have nothing to do with him."

"That is my own Maggie. I hope that will be a settler for him."

"I fear not," she anxiously replied. "He spoke about you, said that I was throwing him aside for you, and that he would be even with you. I dread that man, Rob. He seems to be a desperate character, and may seek to do you an injury."

"Let him try it, and he will find that he has no child to play with. I have not spent weeks in the woods, and put my mark on panthers and wolves, to fear a fellow like that. If he troubles you again, he will have me to settle with."

"You have another chance?" she asked, changing the subject.

"Yes, and he has two. There is a sort of challenge between us. He cannot beat my last shot without touching the bull's eye exactly in the centre, and if he does I will cover his bullet for him."

As they conversed the firing rapidly continued. At this juncture the judges called out—

"There are only three chances left. One to Robert Gordon, and two to Dick Brown. Come, gentlemen, take your places, and dash the ox."

The crowd slightly separated to permit the entrance of the two remaining competitors. The one last named proved to be the man between whom and Robert had sprang up a feeling of rivalry.

"Do your prettiest, my friend," said

the latter, somewhat sarcastically, as they came together. "I want to see what you are going to do with my last shot before I put in another bullet."

"I'm going to beat it dead!" said the other, with a savage intonation of voice. "I've got a ball in my rifle that will go where you can't put one."

"Brag's a good dog, Mr. Brown. But brag won't take the ox."

"Hang the ox. It ain't the ox I'm shooting for."

"What then?" asked Rob.

"The girl!" replied the other, in a low, fierce voice. "I dare you to shoot with me for the girl. I'm bound to have her—and if you want to come in first best, you'll have to beat me with a bullet."

"The girl?" repeated Rob, angrily. "There is but one way I will shoot for her. I shot a wolf once that ventured too near her in the woods. He careful how you trouble her, or I may make up my mind to try some more wolf-shooting."

This angry colloquy was broken by one of the judges exclaiming—

"Come, Mr. Brown, your board's up."

"Take care you ain't stirred up a calamity," said Brown, savagely, as he moved toward his position. "You start a horse if you start me."

This colloquy was carried on in a low voice, out of hearing of the persons surrounding them.

The last speaker took his place and raised his weapon with great deliberation. He was a tall, muscular fellow, and stood firm as a rock as he brought the rifle to his eye, his bronzed, fierce face full of a savage expression that showed his native disposition more truly than his usual demeanor. A moment, and the rifle belched forth its fiery missile, with a quick, loud report.

"A good shot!" cried the judge, as he examined it. "But it won't win. You've got to do better. Only the bull's eye will take the hide."

"Here's for it then," said Brown, who had carefully reloaded his rifle, again stepping into position.

He now raised it with still greater care, and glanced along the sights for a time that seemed an age to the impatience of these quick shooters. The trigger was touched, and the ball again sped to its destination.

The judges rushed quickly to examine it. They seemed to be some time in forming their opinion, measuring, and conversing eagerly in low tones.

"It's mighty near a tie," one of them at length announced. "It's not easy to decide, but we think it has a shade the best."

A shout from the crowd greeted this decision.

"Come, Rob, you've got the last shot. Go in for it. Beat your best, come from various friendly voices in the throng."

With a smile Rob stepped into his place, and calmly awaited the placing of his board in position. A new piece of paper had been pasted over the centre, concealing the hole pierced by his former shot.

With intense interest the people pressed up, anxious to see their friend triumph over this comparative stranger.

Every trace of nervousness seemed to have left the marksmen's body. He stood with easy grace in his position, raising his rifle with a rapidity that showed a full assurance in his mind.

The aim seemed careless to the lookers-on, so quickly did he fire after raising the weapon to his eye.

A loud shout from the judges announced the result.

"In the centre, true as a die. Good for you, Rob Gordon. That takes the first

choice. And there ain't been a better shot here this year."

CHAPTER II.

THE FOOT OF THE ANTHRAX.

The shooting match was kept up with unabated vigor until darkness fell upon the scene. Even then some enthusiastic souls, undeterred by the gloom, lit up their barrels with tallow candles, and continued to shoot, articles of the most diversified character serving as the prizes in this winter species of gambling.

And the younger portion of the party had a more attractive game on hand. In a large hall attached to the hotel the young men and women were assembled, eager to take part in dances which had been arranged to follow the festivities of the day.

It was a different affair from any civil idea of a ball. The music provided consisted of a violin in the hands of an odd-looking old negro, who was perched upon the head of a barrel to elevate him somewhat above the crowd. He wore a coat long enough to clothe not only himself, but half the barrel, and padded till it had all the colors of the rainbow. His thick, protruding lips, staring eyes, and swelling in kinky knots through his well-ventilated hat, and dandily black hose, made in all a most grotesque figure.

His dancing tunes were all in very rapid time, and bore so strong a similarity, that only the various titles he gave them hindered them all being mistaken for the same air. He accompanied them with occasional snatches of negro minstrelsy, in which the audience frequently joined, adding greatly to the grotesqueness of the scene.

And the dancing was such as only vigorous muscles, plentiful vitality, and a keen zest for the sport could long have endured.

None of your wheedling and wheedling ways of getting over the floor, such as I've seen in the cities. That's not the sort for the Tennessee gals and fellows. We mean work, that's us. None of your flirts and fantasies; but a regular snifter, cover the buckle, chicken-futter, breakdown."

With this explanation to a stranger, who was present as a looker-on, the excited backwoodsman leaped again into the midst of the noise, making the house tremble with his exertions.

Rob Gordon and his sweetheart, Maggie Campbell, were among the most skillful of the dancers present. They avoided, it is true, the more violent of the bersechorean efforts. But they were both born and bred on the frontier, were young, active, and enthusiastic, and full of that physical vigor which finds enjoyment in the most active exercises.

Dick Brown had taken no further part in the shooting match after his defeat by his rival.

Though known to but few present, and rather mistrusted by all, he made his way into the dancing room, and stood for some time as a spectator of the scene, his eyes fixed upon the gracefully-moving forms of Rob and Maggie, with a fierce glare that betokened ill to one or both of them.

But he was not left long without a partner. The frank manner and sociable disposition of the frontiersman soon brought him acquaintances, and ere long he was on the floor, dancing away for dear life in the midst of the merriment.

But the luscious country lass who kept step with him was not the partner he coveted. Through all the evolutions of the dance he kept his eyes fixed on the pair in whom he was so deeply interested.

He took an opportunity, during a momentary absence of his rival from Maggie's side, to approach her, and request the pleasure of her hand in the dance.

"Will you be so good, Mr. Brown," she answered, somewhat haughtily, "but I am engaged."

"Well, then, the next dance?"

"No dance with you, sir. I have already engaged myself for all the sets that I intend to take part in."

She turned abruptly away, and advanced to meet her lover, who was approaching from the other end of the room.

Neither of them noticed the sinister look which was bent upon them by the discarded suitor, as he proceeded to tell Rob of her offer of a partner.

"Dick Brown again!" he said in a vexed tone. "That gentleman has got to shift his quarters, and keep out of your track, or—"

"Or what, Rob? But don't let making threats. I do not think that he will disturb me again."

"If he does I'll settle him, that's all; and there's no brag in that. I find that I have to leave here for an hour or two, Maggie. I've just heard of some business that must be attended to right away. But I'll be back by twelve o'clock, or along there, and you have plenty of friends here to take care of you till I return."

"Don't doubt but that I will take care of myself. But thank you go."

"Yes. It's some business that can't be put off. I'll be back, though. You can look for me, and wait till I come."

"I shall do that," she replied. "There will be very few leave here before daylight, and if I wait till the sun is up it won't be the first time."

"I'll be back long before that," he repeated. "I'll leave my rifle here, as I will not need it. Don't wait for me, Maggie, if you feel like dancing. And now, goodbye, till I get back. There was a peculiar sound, like a light explosion, drowned

by the noise from all but one pair of ears in the room, and the next moment Rob was on his feet.

Just as he went out alone, Maggie, after his departure, looked round with a feeling of dread for the man who had been persecuting her. Not that she had, just now, any real fear of him, but that his persistence had grown annoying to her.

With considerable relief she found that he was not in sight. He had left the room about the same time as Rob.

Had she known the object in this, had she dreamed of the imminent peril of her lover, her state of mind would have been very different from what it was at present, and she would have resented the whole assemblage in person, rather than have entered again into the frivolity of the dance.

Rob went rapidly down the country road leading to his destination, with a light, swinging step, and a cheery heart, that made little account of distance.

The moon had risen and threw its pale lustre upon the road, tempering the darkness and rendering his pathway plainly visible.

As he went on, however, the road ran through a dense woodland, which permitted but a stray beam of light to touch the surface, and made his way as dark as through some deep cavern.

But he knew the road thoroughly, and went rapidly on, anxious to finish his business and return to the festivities which he had reluctantly quitted.

Several times during his progress he heard a faint sound, as of the footstep of a man following him.

Once or twice he stopped and looked keenly back, but the gloom was impenetrable, and no sound now came to his ears, other than the usual faint whispers of the night.

Emerging from the wood a long stretch of road lay before him, illuminated by the moon, which was now attaining some height in the sky.

Along this he proceeded with increased speed, looking back occasionally, for he could not drive from his mind the thought that he had been pursued, though why or by whom he could not conjecture. His mind was slightly disturbed by what he had heard concerning his would-be rival during the day.

Yet he had left this man at the dance. It could not be he. In all probability, he told himself, it was only imagination, yet he could not help wishing that he had brought along his rifle, that trusty companion from which he seldom allowed himself to be parted.

He was right in his conjecture. He was followed. A shadowy figure trailed after him through the woods, holly keeping the centre of the road, and pursued him through the open country, clinging to the road-side where the bushes threw a shadow into the path of the moonlight.

This silent pursuit continued without further suspicion by his object, until the latter entered a village, about three miles distant from the one he had left. It was here his present business conducted him.

He entered a house in this village, in which he remained about an hour. On emerging he took the road back to the point he had started from.

With a light step and a happy heart Rob Gordon trotted over the miles that lay between him and his sweetheart. No thought of danger now entered his mind. The moon lit up the road to almost the lustre of day, and he was enabled to step out with a freedom that made little account of the miles of distance.

On entering the village a soft, silvery glow replaced the light of the open road, the moon's rays being unable to make their way through the densely clustering leaves.

He was here obliged to walk more slowly, and something, perhaps only the gloom, perhaps a sound such as he had heard before, revived the suspicion of pursuit in his mind.

He went warily along, his eyes striving to pierce the darkness on either side, and to trace the road behind and before, where a faint glimmering light rendered objects indistinctly visible.

But this quest was in vain. There was nothing visible of a suspicious character, nothing audible like the sound that he fancied he had heard.

At length, in the distance ahead, a broad gleam of light announced the end of the wood, and the full dominion of the lunar orb again.

With a deep breath of relief he hastened forward, the unusual feeling of apprehension which had possessed him vanishing in the presence of this silvery lustre.

Yet he was often in the deepest danger when most assured of safety. As he reached the very edge of the forest, where a few steps more would have brought him into the open illuminated road, a dark figure rose silently in the screen of bushes by the road-side.

A slender tale, on which the light faintly glimmered, parted the bushes, and in an instant from its mouth shot a flash of light, accompanied by a quick, sharp report. The unsuspecting traveller reeled for a moment, then fell prostrate. The assassin darted back into the wood, and in a minute the silence, which had been broken by this dark deed, resumed its way over the scene, and over the motionless figure that lay stretched out in the road.

CHAPTER III. AFTER THE FUGITIVE.

We must revert to the business of such great importance that it took Rob Gordon from the side of his lady love, on a festive occasion so highly prized by the frontier settlers as a dancing party.

The cause of his sudden movement had been a mischievous delivered into his hand by a youthful messenger. We will proceed to indicate the nature of the information which had so strongly influenced him.

In order to do so we must go back some distance in time, as well as seek a locality remote from the scene to which we have introduced the reader.

Rob Gordon had a brother of a more roving disposition than himself. This brother, Edward by name, had been like himself, reared in the backwoods, and was an expert woodsman. But he was too strongly inclined to see the world to spend his life as Rob had done in the neighborhood of his birthplace.

It was well known that he had been rather wild in his youth, and had made some acquaintances not very creditable to him. Among these was a certain John Henderson, whose reputation was by no means of the whitest. In fact, both Gordon and his associate had suddenly departed for parts unknown, after some discreditable exploits, the nature of which had been kept secret from all but the parties concerned.

Edward Gordon was not heard of for several years after this period, his family fearing that the wild promise of his youth had borne its native fruit, and that his corrupt associations had led him into lawless practices, and might, for all they knew, have reached their fitting terminus in the penitentiary.

They were highly gratified then to hear from him, from Louisville, Kentucky, as connected with the Leather Bank of that city, in the capacity of runner. A respectable position like this could not have been obtained without good reference, and it seemed evident that the runner must have secured some reputation for honesty, and he could have been so trusted.

For a year or two he filled the position, proving careful and strictly reliable, and so winning of his old misdoings rung in the city to his discredit.

At the end of that time, however, an event occurred which brought his connection with the bank to an unfortunate termination. He was attacked in the street by a party of three men, knuckled down, seriously injured, and robbed of a gold coin, and a few dollars in gold coins.

As to the features of this robbery, there were only the hints he had received in corroboration of his story. No one had seen the attack, it having occurred in an unfrequented street.

As in all such cases, a certain amount of suspicion attached to the runner himself. It appears so easy to arrange for a pretended attack of this character, to place one's self in a certain position at a certain hour suitable to the designs of his confederates, while the temptations are so strong, that the feeling of distrust of the bank officer is natural.

Yet there were certain features in this case which did not agree with the theory of an unfaithful officer. In the first place, he was really hurt. There was no sham in the blows he had received. In the second, the amount of money in his possession was much smaller than he often carried.

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As to the features of this robbery, there were only the hints he had received in corroboration of his story. No one had seen the attack, it having occurred in an unfrequented street.

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lost by the bank, and it was useless to seek for him until he was ready thus to return.

The bank officers failed to take this view of the case, and concluded to extend their search beyond the limits of the city. They took it for granted that this letter was but a subterfuge, intended to retard pursuit, and give the fugitive an opportunity to place himself, and his share of the proceeds of the robbery, beyond their reach.

His effect, therefore, was simply to institute a more determined search, a reward being offered for the recovery of any portion of the lost money.

As the circumstances attending the imprisonment of his brother were known to Robert Gordon, his surprise may be imagined, and his haste and anxiety understood, when we give the contents of the note that had so suddenly called him from the dancing party.

It ran as follows:

"DEAR ROB—Come to Tim Hall's as soon as you get this, and be as quiet as a mouse about it. I have broken the stone jug and am wanted bad in Louisville. I am tracking the thieves, and the bonds are tracking me. Don't fail me, Rob. I want to set myself right with you, and maybe you can help me. I am innocent of the charge against me, and will prove it yet."

"Don't lose a minute, I am fearful to stay here long, as I've a notion the bloodhounds of the law are trailing me down this way. Burn this and keep a still tongue."

"YOUR BROTHER NED."

We will not detail the conversation that took place between the brothers, so long parted, and meeting under such trying circumstances.

Edward was earnest and apparently truthful in declaring his honesty, and describing the real state of the case to his brother. He had no direct proof against any person as concerned in the robbery, but was strongly inclined to suspect Jack Henderson as one of the gang.

He was rather well posted concerning the haunts and associates of this individual, and had occupied himself, since his escape from prison, in trying to get upon his trail.

He had good reason to believe that the gang had headed down this way, and thought that he had traced them to within twenty miles of the village in which he then was.

He hoped to be able himself to run them to the earth, but would need aid if it became necessary to make a show of force with them.

Just he depend on Rob's assistance in case he could not find them.

"I don't just happen to know what's in the wind," said the new-comer, in a voice of deep but mellow tone, "but there's a neat bit of a motto which I always stick to when I've got business on hand. Maybe it might help you in your little difficulty."

"What is that?" asked one of the men, somewhat angrily, as he recoiled from a low, ominous growl of the dog, too high whom he had ventured.

"He always says you're right, then go ahead. It mayn't look like much of a hold in a gale of wind, but it's pulled me through a trifle of tight places in my time."

"And who the thunder are you, anyhow?" asked the man, frowning at the thought that he was being laughed at.

"I've got several handles to my name," was the cool reply. "Army men, and folks again very familiar, call me Colonel. When I was in Congress I was generally Mister. But folks about here give me the name I like best, 'cause it's kinder short and handy; and that's plain Davy Crockett, at your service."

As he spoke he rose from his seat and stretched himself to his full height. As he did so the clock on which he had been seated fell to the floor, leaving in full view the table, the clock, and the fugitive.

(To be continued in our next.)

CLAUDIA'S TRIUMPH.

BY CLEMENTINE MONTAGU,
AUTHOR OF "THE COURT OF CONQUEST," ETC.

CHAPTER XLVI. TRAPPED.

My tables, meet it is I sit down,
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least I am sure it may so in the bottom of my shoes.

They stood in breathless silence for a moment listening, and then Alma, in an agony of terror, exclaimed:

"Oh, Frank, we are discovered—we are lost!"

"Not yet," he said, though he trembled more for her than for himself. "I can get out easily."

"How?"

"I will just walk down through the house, dear, and out at the front door, and trust to the servants not knowing me."

He went to the door as he spoke, and turned the handle softly, and saw him start and turn pale.

"Oh, Heaven!" he murmured.

"What is it?" she cried, flying to his side.

"The door is fast. We are trapped, Alma—looked in."

"Langham must have done it when she went out, and somebody is coming to the other door along the corridor. It can be no one but Lord Nortonshall. What shall we do?"

"What door is this?" asked Frank, trying another, which was locked.

"A room my lord occupies sometimes."

"I'll try the window, then."

"There's nothing between it and an underground area protected by iron spikes. You'll be killed on the spot."

The footsteps outside were very audible now, and like a hunted deer Francis Vavasour turned from one place to another, seeking for a way to escape, and finding none.

"What door is this?" he asked, turning to the only remaining one—that of the little ante-room, which was half boudoir, half dressing room.

"There's no outlet from there," she said, despairingly; "but it is better than nothing. Hide in there, and Heaven help us both."

All three passed in less time than it takes to tell it, and in lessening a burning hot upon her hand, Frank rushed into the little room.

She locked the door and put the key in her bosom, and then, trembling in every limb, she went to the door which opened into the corridor and listened.

Footsteps were approaching, of that there could be no doubt; but they were stopping now and then, as though the intruder was listening and reconnoitering, wishing to approach by very slow degrees.

open slowly and gently, and saw a figure shrouded in a cloak enter as noiselessly as a spirit.

It moved cautiously about the room, looking here and there as it went, till it came and stood opposite to the sofa where she lay.

Alma could bear it no longer, and she turned and sat up, staring with all her might to appear calm, though every nerve was thrilling with excitement and terror.

"Who are you? What do you want?" she asked.

A white hand loosened the cloak, and it fell to the ground. Alma shrieked aloud in her surprise and terror. A stately, domineering lady, tall and graceful, stood before her, regarding her with pitying, mournful-looking eyes, and she recognized in her unveiled visitor the woman that she had said was her husband's mistress—the famous actress, Claudia Wynne.

Lady Nortonshall stood up and stared at the intruder in amazement, only equalled by her terror.

"How did you come here," she asked again, "and what for? Are you not Mademoiselle Claudia?"

"Yes, madam," was the reply, in a soft, musical voice. "I am Claudia. You have heard of me, I have no doubt."

"I have,"

Alma's voice took a bitter tone as she spoke.

"Who has not heard of you?"

"All the kingdom, I daresay," Claudia replied, and her voice was very sad. "I am the actress whom the world would teach you to despise—the woman whom your husband would give all his possessions to make his mistress, and yet who stands here in the chamber of his wife."

"How dare you?" exclaimed Alma, with flashing eyes, forgetting, in her indignation, her alarm and the occasion of it at the sight of her who stood there.

"How dare you come here? Am I not outraged and insulted enough, without having to endure your presence? This, at least, is my room, and as mistress of this much of my husband's house, I order you to leave it instantly—instantly, do you hear?"

"I hear, madam."

"And you will not?"

"Not yet."

"Not yet! Do you dare defy me? You say my husband would give anything to make you his mistress. I have known you for such for many a long month past."

Claudia's face grew very white, and she grasped the back of a chair to steady herself, for she trembled all over.

"You taunt me bitterly," she said.

"Not more bitterly than you deserve. Once more, you hear me—go!"

"Not till I have fulfilled my mission in coming here. Some time I pray Heaven you may know me better. There is no time to show you how false are your suspicions now."

"But what do you want?"

"I came here to serve you—to save you from a great danger."

"To serve me?"

Alma laughed, a short, bitter laugh.

"Yes, to serve you."

"Thank you," the wife replied, her taunting tone coming back again. "This is too much. A nobleman's mistress forces herself into the prison of his wronged, insulted wife, and says she is come to serve her. Oh, it is too good to be true—too kindly generous on the part of a great woman like yourself, Mademoiselle Claudia!"

"Again I taunt. I do not deserve it. I repeat my words. I came here to serve a gentleman here."

"A gentleman! How dare you?"

"I can dare anything that is true. You cannot deny it."

"I can. Who sent you hither with such a calumny? It is false!"

"Hardly," replied Claudia, stooping to something which lay at her feet. "There is his glove; there, on that table, the muffler he has taken from his neck. You are a bad hand at intrigue, Lady Nortonshall. Mr. V

Jan. 3, 1874.]

"Sure that I would be befooled no more by a galling woman and a green boy, that's what I'd do."

"Nay, Lord Nortonshall. If you take it so seriously, I hardly know how to advise."

"Seriously! How would you take such a thing?"

"As a jest."

"A jest?"

"Yes—just worth the paper it is written on—no more."

"I don't think this is a jest; but I'll find out. I'll surprise my lady to-night, and see what she's about."

"Be cautious, if you do, Nortonshall."

"Cautious! In my own house?"

"Cautious, not to make too much of an eye, or you'll frighten your wife into flight, and raise all the neighborhood with your noise. Don't make things public till you are certain."

"Oh, don't be afraid. I'll be as gentle as a sucking dove," as the fellow says in the play; but if I find him, let him look to himself, that's all—let him look to himself."

Even Austin Bertram could not repress a shiver at the expression of Lord Nortonshall's face as he spoke.

"There'll be murder," he said to himself, "if he does find him. Well, well, it's no business of mine."

"Have you no clue to the writer of this delectable epistle?" he asked, aloud.

"None."

"No idea from what direction it comes?"

"Not the slightest."

"It looks to me as though it came out of some City office."

"I know no one in the city."

"But plenty of sly people know you."

"Not likely."

"Pshaw, my lord! Do you think your affairs are any secret? The difference between you and Lady Nortonshall is common talk. I think this pleasant misson comes from the East, like the wise men."

"Why?"

"Look at it—paper, seal, writing, all has a commercial look about it. Come, Nortonshall, don't worry yourself about it. I say it is some plot of a bevy of scatter-brained clerks, who have heard something of your domestic affairs, and want to play you a trick. You will be watched if you do go home this evening, depend upon it."

"I shall."

"As you please. I fancy you will find it waste of time."

"Anyhow I shall stay for satisfaction's sake. Will you stay, too, and see what comes of it."

"I cannot."

"Is your business so important?"

"It is—very. I must leave town to-day. I don't think I shall be back to-day. If I am I will give a look in, and see how things have turned out."

"Do. I will tell you, even if I have been hoaxed."

"As you will find you have, depend upon it."

Austin Bertram's manner was perfectly cool and easy. There was nothing in it to lead any one to suppose that he knew anything about it, yet it was his hand that had penned both the note to Claudia and to Lord Nortonshall—his evil mind which led Francis Vavasour blindly into the snare, and planned the whole wicked conspiracy against the unoffending Lady Nortonshall.

Claudia Wynne, with her woman's penetration, was right. She had detected a plot at once, but by whom planned she could not tell. Her sagacity led her to think it extremely probable that whoever wrote to her would write to his lordship as well.

Lord Nortonshall went away, resolving to keep away till night, and then surprise his guilty wife—if, indeed, she were guilty—and her hated lover.

He went to Baywater; but Claudia was out, and Dorothy extremely dry and short in her answers to his many questions.

She declared that she did not know when her mistress would be at home, and volunteered no further information. She did not like her mistress's aristocratic admirer, and could hardly force herself to speak civilly to him.

So his lordship "nursed his wrath to keep it warm" all through the long hours of that weary day, and at night stole into his own house like a thief, and crept upstairs to his wife's room, with rage and revengeful passion whirling in his mind and heart.

He listened a moment before he knocked at the door, and distinctly heard his wife's voice.

"He is there," he said to himself, and, had the door yielded to his hand, in all human probability he would have been his hapless wife's life and honor on earth; but the few moments that elapsed before Alma turned the key sufficed to calm the first wild excitement of his passion.

"I must be calm," he murmured; "calm and cool. But it will be his life or mine; there can be no holding back after this."

He looked around the room a moment before his glance fell on his shrinking wife, and then, advancing to the sofa where she had thrown herself, he seized her by the wrists, and dragged her up into a sitting posture.

"Look me in the face, false woman!" he shouted, beside himself with rage. "Look at the husband you have deceived and betrayed, if you have impudence and bravado enough to do it without flinching."

He read guilt in the terror which prevented her from speaking, and again shook her roughly.

"Who is here with you?" he hissed.

"Don't lie. I will have his life, were he twenty times your lover. Don't attempt to deny it!"

"I deny nothing, my lord."

She spoke calmly, though every nerve was quivering with agitation.

"No, my lord?"

"No, my lord? You were quite right in your suspicions. I had a companion here. These rooms are not so lively as to make me shrink from other society than that of my maid when I can get it."

"I know it—I heard you talking to him."

"Hardly, my lord. There is no 'him' in the case. You did hear me speaking, but my companion was one of whom you will thoroughly approve, unless the world wrongs you very much."

"Indeed! Who is he?"

"Claudia, my lord."

The actress emerged as she spoke from the corner where she had been standing unobserved in the peer's fury.

"I should be sorry to intrude in your house, Lord Nortonshall," she added, quietly, "but your words make me think I am most unwelcome."

"Claudia!"

He could say nothing but her name, so astonished was he.

"Even so, my lord. I can understand your surprise, but not your anger at my presence here. You have often wished to introduce me to your wife, yet you abuse her and insult me the first time I appear before her unasked."

"Insult you! Oh, no, Claudia. You know I never could do that."

His tone of endearment went to Alma's

heart with a bitter pang. Even her presence did not prevent him speaking words of tenderness to another woman.

"How, in the friend's name, did you get in here?" he went on, after a pause. "And what were the servants about not to receive you in the drawing-room, and bring my lady down to see you properly?"

"I am like all women, my lord—fond of doing out-of-the-way things. As to how I got in, do you remember the key you gave me, and the promise you made me at the same time—that I should be welcome whenever I liked to come?"

"And so you are—more welcome than any one on the face of the earth."

"My lord, remember!"

She pointed to Alma's shrinking form as she spoke; but Lord Nortonshall's brutal nature was in the ascendant now.

"Oh, don't snivel, my lady," he said, coarsely. "Claudia and I understand each other very well."

Alma's face was bowed upon her clasped hands, and she was weeping now—shedding such bitter tears as only a woman stung and insulted in her tenderest feelings can weep. If Lord Nortonshall could have seen the bitter loathing that Claudia felt for him at his cowardly words, he would not have been so sure of his secret understanding with her. She broke from his detaining hand to bend over his suffering wife.

"Don't," she said; "don't grieve like that. He knows that he does not speak truly. Some day you will know it, and know, too, that you have had no wrong, no dishonor, from the hands of Claudia Wynne."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

PROLOGUE.

Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmation strong
As proof of Holy Writ.

Alma looked up into Claudia's face with tear-blinded eyes.

"I believe you," she said, simply.

"Thank you," was the low reply.

"I believe every word you say," Lady Nortonshall repeated, "fully and truly; but such bitter words are hard to hear moved from a husband's lips."

Claudia pressed her hand with a firm, reassuring touch, and then turned to his lordship, and stood by his side once more, with a winning smile on her pretty lips.

"My lord," she said, "I have been here too long already. May I crave your escort down-stairs, and a glass of that delicious wine you gave me the other day? I feel rather faint."

"A glass of wine! Anything that the house affords!"

He laid his hand on the bell as he spoke, but she stopped him.

"Not here, my lord, if you please," she said, with a meaning glance at Alma, which she perfectly understood. "Down-stairs, if you please, in that pretty little snugger of yours. I have something to tell you."

Lord Nortonshall's heart beat thick and fast, and his eyes dilated as he drew her arm in his own.

"I shall win her yet," he thought to himself. "She's coming round—her visit to these rooms was only a pretext for meeting me!"

He turned to his wife with something less of brutality in his voice and manner.

"Good-night, my lady," he said aloud. "I've been hoaxed, it seems, by some meddling fool."

"I suppose you have," she replied, quietly.

"It's well for you that it was a hoax and nothing more. If it had been true, there'd have been murder done before your eyes!"

Claudia turned to say good-night, too, and found time to whisper a rapid word of caution to Alma's ear.

"Quick! There's not a moment to be lost. He may leave me and come back—still suspicious!"

Lady Nortonshall looked the thanks she dared not speak, and they left the room. She sat like a statue till her retreating footsteps died away on the stair-case which led to the front of the house, and then springing up she unlocked the door of the little room where Francis Vavasour was concealed.

"Out!" she said. "Out, quick! there is not a single moment to lose! Oh, what a danger we have escaped!"

"Claudia is an angel!" the young man said, passionately. "A noble hearted, unselfish creature! You will not hate her any more, Alma?"

"Hate her! Has she not saved us? Good-bye, Frank—my love, my friend—good-bye!"

She held out her hands, but he clasped her in his arms, and pressed passionate kisses on her lips.

"My darling! my darling!" he murmured. "Heaven forgive me and help us both! I must call you mine once more, even though your husband fulfilled his threat and murdered me at your feet. Good-bye! Heaven help and comfort you, for I cannot!"

Once more he folded her in his arms, and, with a passionate, despairing kiss, he was gone.

She heard him go to the bottom of the stairs and steal cautiously along a passage which led to the back-door. A moment afterward the door closed lightly, and she knew that he was gone clear of the house and into the street.

Then her calmness deserted her, and, sinking on the floor by the side of the couch, she burst into hysterical tears.

She crouched there a long time, heeding nothing, till suddenly a light hand was laid on her shoulder, and starting up, she saw Langham.

"My lady," said that damsel, quietly, "I fear you are ill."

"No, Langham, a little low-spirited, that is all. I shall be better now you have come in."

"Ah, you have been lonely, my lady: I did not think of that. I have been gone fully two hours. It is a long time for your ladyship to be alone in these dreary rooms, for they are dreary from their isolated position."

She laid such a seemingly spiteful emphasis on the word "alone" that her mistress glanced keenly at her to see whether there were any suspicion in her face. There was none. Langham looked as demure as an ever, and there was nothing about the room to betray the presence of an intruder.

"I am glad you are come," Alma said again, after a few minutes.

"I was just thinking I would undress myself if you did not get back soon. I shall be glad to get to bed, my lady."

"Yes, I don't feel very well this evening. It is very languid weather, I think."

"As your ladyship pleases, of course, but—"

"But what? Am I to have rules laid down when I shall go to bed, and when I shall get up?"

"Oh, my lady; certainly not! I was only thinking."

"What?"

"What I shall say to my lord if he sends for you."

"He will not send, he is much more pleasantly occupied."

"He is out, your ladyship."

"Oh, dear no; he is at home."

"At home?"

"Yes; he is down-stairs in his writing-room with Mr. Deane, Claudia Wynne. They have just left me."

Langham was completely mystified. She was certain Lady Nortonshall had had a secret visitor, but how had he escaped her master's eyes and ears?

She made no remark, but attended to her duties, undressed her mistress and saw her into bed, still puzzling deeply in her own mind over what she had said. She waited till she thought it likely his lordship would be alone, and then went softly down-stairs and knocked at the door of his room.

"Come in," he said, in no very amiable tone, and when she presented herself, his only greeting was a surly—

"Well!"

"I am afraid I intrude, my lord; but—"

"No, you don't. What have you got to say? Out with it. I know you don't come here for nothing."

"No, indeed, my lord."

"Well, what is it?"

"When your lordship engaged me to attend on my lady, you gave me to understand that, in consequence of unfortunate differences between you, my duties—"

"Hang it, woman, come to the point at once, can't you?" he exclaimed, irascibly.

"I told you you were to let me know if your mistress did anything my wife should not do. Now, what has she done? For, of course, you are come to tell me something."

"I am, my lord."

"Out with it, then."

"Only that my lady has a lover that she receives in secret," Langham replied, coolly.

"You told me to speak plainly, my lord, and I have done so at your bidding."

"Nothing like it," he replied, with a coarse laugh. "I like to call a spade a spade when I talk. But your news is stale, Miss Langham. That my lady has a lover I know well, and half London knows it too, worse luck. That she should receive him if she could, I believe most faithfully; that she has done it, I doubt. She is too well taken care of for that."

"She has, my lord; not an hour ago."

Lord Nortonshall laughed again.

"No, they have hoaxed you too, Langham, have they?" he said.

"Hoaxed, my lord?"

"Yes. That same story has kept me in town all day to-day, and brought me up the back staircase of my own house like a thief this evening. My wife had a visitor, but it was a lady, and I was made to feel not a little ashamed in the matter, I can tell you."

"Still, in the face of all this, I think I am right, my lord. If your lordship will only listen to me for a moment, I think you will find you have been hoaxed, but not by any one out of doors."

"By whom, then?"

"By my lady, and by whoever your lordship found visiting her in her rooms."

"Go on; don't make such a long-winded story; but be quick. I am sick of hearing about it. Sit down on that chair, and tell me all you know; and in the friend's name, out it short, or you'll drive me mad."

Thus adjured, Langham sat down on the edge of the chair and began his story. She was not afraid of her master. She knew she was necessary to him, and she braved his wrath in a way that none of the other servants would have dared to do.

"My lady gave me leave to go out this evening," she said, "very readily, I thought."

"Glad to get rid of you for a bit, I dare say."

"No doubt, my lord. She had previously received a note."

"From whom?"

"My lady did not show it to me, your lordship."

"No, but you read it. Don't mince matters. Out with it. Where did it come from?"

"From Mr. Francis Vavasour, my lord."

Lord Nortonshall ground an oath between his teeth with such ferocity that even Langham shuddered.

"What was in it?" he demanded, fiercely.

"A few words, only saying he should be here to-night."

"He?" exclaimed the peer, rubbing his hands and chuckling, as though he caught his wife tripping over some great joy.

"Well, well, go on! What else?"

"My lady gave me leave to go out, and I was absent about two hours. I returned by the back way, and within a dozen yards of the door a man coming in the opposite direction ran against me."

"Coming from the house?"

"I presume so, my lord."

"Why?"

"Because when he raised his hat to apologize, I knew him at once. It was Mr. Vavasour. He has been frequently pointed out to me as a person of mark."

"As my wife's lover, I suppose?"

"No, your lordship, as a man saved from a wreck by almost a miracle."

"No matter—you know him?"

"Perfectly."

"Go on."

"I went up the staircase, of which you keep the key, my lord, found the door unlocked, my lady in hysterics on the floor by the sofa, and these lying about the room."

She laid two articles on the table before him as he spoke, and he recognized in one of them a sort of Indian embroidery, of a peculiar fashion and texture, which Francis Vavasour constantly wore.

He subdued his rage, though he could have torn the offending fabric to pieces with his trembling hands, and spoke to Langham once more.

"You may be mistaken. Mr. Vavasour may have given this to Mr. Deane. Claudia. They are very intimate, and she was my wife's visitor."

"It is hardly an article a lady would receive."

"Let Langham, with a look of triumph. 'At any rate she could not wear this.'"

The second article was conclusive. It was a man's thick leather glove, the curve of the hand from which it had been pulled remaining in it still.

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 9.)

"A baby was recently born in a Pullman palace car near St. Louis. The lady was going on a visit to her mother at Cincinnati, and the advent of the little stranger was very unexpected. Fortunately, a doctor was found among the passengers, so that the distinguished arrival received the attention which it was entitled. A general contribution was levied on the lady passengers for garments which might be used by the baby, and by the time St. Louis was reached both mother and child were reported to be in excellent condition. It was a girl."

The Smuggler's Daughter.

BY JACK RATLIN.

The rocky shores of the English coast, in the far north, were shining under the rays of the rapidly declining sun. Bare brown rocks looked down upon a shining sand, and in the distance dimpled the waves of the "Irish" sea. A grand scene—and so thought the beautiful girl who, standing upon the summit of the cliff, looked out across the sea.

"They ought to know the danger if they come," she muttered to herself. "Oh, I would warn them of the peril which hangs over them. I would give my life to save them; and I know that they are doomed to lie in prison if they are not warned."

She stood bareheaded, looking out to sea. A beautiful English face, with sunny brown hair and eyes of "Heaven's own azure." The winds of the sea had browned her fair cheek, but the rich blood mantling under it gave her complexion a rich, creamy look. She was Myrtle Deane, the daughter of Captain Deane, of the Osprey, unconsciously she had spoken aloud, and was surprised to hear a low, taunting laugh close at her elbow. Looking up quickly, she saw a man in the uniform of an officer of the "coast-guard" standing by her side—a dark-browed man, in the prime of life, with an evil, forbidding look in his deep-set eyes, and that seemed impossible for them to escape. Scarcely a hundred fathoms separated the schooner when a hoarse hail and stern command to "heave to" was heard across the water.

"You take the wheel, George," hissed Captain Deane, "and you, boys, be handy at the foremast."

"Lower your peak," cried the voice of Job Deane. "Lower away, or stand a broadside."

The peak went down as suddenly that the Osprey seemed to come to a standstill at once; and as the schooner was running side by side, the cutter forged ahead. Then, at the order of Captain Deane, the men sprang to the haliards, and to the utter disgust of the revenue men the Osprey shot under their stern, and was away before the wind, leaving them rapidly astern. A perfect howl of baffled vengeance burst from the lips of Job Deane, and the cutter wore; but by this time the Osprey, the swiftest schooner on the coast, was far in advance. The cutter followed, yawing and firing her bow-chasers, but the Osprey disappeared in the gathering gloom and was safe.

Captain Deane never made another smuggling trip. At his daughter's earnest solicitations, he gave up the illegal business. The Osprey was sold and a larger craft purchased, and George Lawton engaged in lawful traffic as her captain. Job Deane never troubled them, for upon the night when the cutter chased them he was lost overboard, and his body was never found.

Myrtle Deane is now the wife of her father's enemy, and will be faithful to him, even to the end.

The Osprey always came down from the north, as she ran along the Irish coast by daylight, reached the English coast at nightfall, and came down at dusk. The evening closed in and still the boat crept up the coast, keeping about a league from it.

"There are the Black Rocks," cried Myrtle, "and as I live there comes the Osprey."

Nearly half a mile distant, clearly revealed in the light of the rising moon, they saw a slipper-built schooner coming down before the wind. A moment more and they had hailed her, and the schooner was thrown up into the wind, the boat rounded to under her stern and Myrtle sprang on deck.

"Away you go, Billy," she cried, "keep out of the way of the cutter."

The boat cast off and slipped away toward the coast.

Captain Deane, a grizzled old sailor, and George Lawton, his handsome mate, the lover of pretty Myrtle, sprang forward in surprise.

"Don't stop to dally," she cried, sharply. "You are betrayed. Job Deane and his men are in waiting at the Black Rocks, and the cutter is in the offing waiting for you. Go about as soon as you can and be off."

It was lively work. The schooner went about like a top and headed out to sea. As her sails distended they caught a glimpse of other sails down aboard, and knew that the Queen's cutter was upon them. No close, indeed, that it seemed impossible for them to escape. Scarcely a hundred fathoms separated the schooner when a hoarse hail and stern command to "heave to" was heard across the water.

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A negro in Boston complained at a police station that a brother colored man had broken a chair all to splinters over his head. Being told there were no marks on his cranium, he said: "No! 'e didn't make no marks, but 'e smashed de chair all ter pieces, and de chair belonged ter me."

A woman riding in a wagon to the railroad station in East Bridgewater, Mass., was thrown thirty-five feet by the locomotive striking the vehicle. Picking herself up from the debris she calmly surveyed the scene, and remarked, "There, it was only last week that I paid twenty-five dollars for repairing that wagon!"

The managers of a girls' industrial school in New Haven, recently got up an interesting entertainment for the amusement of the pupils. It consisted of a mock marriage between the superintendent and his wife, the ceremony being performed by a young lady teacher. The pupils sat in rapt attention during the performance, and no doubt thought it preferable to the arena.

Near Knoxville, Tenn., it is said there is a male which has been but one time outside of its stable in twenty years, and then it was taken out by the soldiers during the war, and as they could not use the animal, it was immediately released. It is said that its hoofs have grown to the length of about twelve inches, turning up at the ends, while its mane reaches to the ground.

President Nott, in his wise old age, once took a newly-married pair aside, and said: "I want to give you this advice, my children. Don't try to be happy. Happiness is a very snappy, and if you sham her, you will never catch her. But just go quietly on and do your duty and she will come to you."

The Beginnings of Disease.—It is as true as that "great oaks from little acorns grow," that trifling diseases are often succeeded by seemingly trifling ailments. Casual fits of indigestion, superfluous chronic dyspepsia, occasional bilious attacks culminate in fixed diseases of the liver, intermittent twinges in the legs and arms degenerate into the continuous agony of acute rheumatism. Not that such disastrous consequences are inevitable. Far from it. They are attributable to neglect. A few doses of HENRY'S STOMACH BITTER will always cure casual indigestion or an ordinary bilious affection, or arrest the preliminary symptoms of rheumatism. It is true that when dyspepsia, or liver complaint, or rheumatism, or constipation, or nervous debility, or sick headache has become a permanent evil, and has even baffled the skill of eminent physicians and resisted all the ordinary remedies, it may still be eradicated by the Bitter; but it is easier, as Macbeth avers, to crush the serpent's egg than the grown serpent.

Symptoms of Liver Complaint.

A sallow or yellow color of skin, or yellowish brown spots on face and other parts of body; dullness and drowsiness with frequent belching; distension, bitter or bad taste in mouth; dryness of throat and internal heat; palpitation; in many cases a dry, teasing cough, with more or less, uneasy appetite, raising of food, choking sensation in throat; distress, heaviness, bloated or full feeling about stomach and sides; pain in sides, back or breast, and about shoulders; cold, pain and soreness through bowels, with heat; constipation alternating with diarrhea; piles, flatulency, nervousness, confusion of attention; rock of blood to head, with symptoms of apoplexy, numbness of limbs, especially at night; cold chills alternating with hot flashes; kidney and urinary difficulties; dizziness, low spirits, unsociability and gloomy forebodings. Only a few of above symptoms likely to be present at one time. All who use Dr. Pierce's Alt. Ext. or Golden Medical Discovery for Liver Complaint and its complications are loud in its praise.

A CURB OF LIVER DISEASE.

Rock, Texas, May 10th, 1873.

Dr. R. V. PIERCE:

Dear Sir: My wife last year at this time was confined to her bed with Chronic Liver Disease. I had one of the best doctors to see her, and he gave her up to die, when I came upon some of your medicine. I bought one bottle and commenced giving it. She then weighed 210 lbs; now she weighs 140 lbs,

1874. 1874.

OUR OPENING STORIES

FOR

THE NEW YEAR.

We shall begin in the paper of the week after next (No. 25), a fascinating novel of English life entitled

The Ghost of Norman Park.

OR,

TWO WOMEN WRONGED.

BY MARY ATHERSTONE BIRD;

to be followed by the thrilling romance of Northern and of Tropical life—

THE SEA OF FIRE;

OR,

ON THE BRINK OF A PRECIPICE.

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

Also, by a new story from the pen of BURE THORNTON, whose late work, "JESSIE DALL, The Conductor's Daughter," excited much interest by its strange plot and striking incidents. His new serial will be entitled

HARD TIMES;

OR,

THE REAL VICTIMS OF THE PANIC.

A TALE OF THE WINTER OF 1873-74.

It is scarcely necessary to state to those acquainted with THE POST, that the best stories of Love, Adventure, and High and Low Life, in this country and in England, etc., to be found in any weekly paper, will appear in our columns during the coming year. Our Letters, Miscellaneous Articles, etc., also will be of the highest character.

A WOMAN'S VOW.

BY MARY E. WOODSON.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TWO AFFAIRS OF HONOR FOR ONE DAY.

It was still early when Templeton bade Violetta Worthington good night, and accompanied her to the boarding-house of Mrs. Primrose.

Those who have engaged in a season's flirtation "for the pastime of the thing," often find that the pain of the ending will wear, when the little coquette has in a measure grown thoughtful, and the inevitable farewell must be spoken. Perhaps Templeton's real feelings had been so little enlisted as they well could be under the circumstances; but he knew, on the other hand, that he was loved—loved as only women of Violetta Worthington's stamp can love—with blind devotion, unquestioning self-surrender, utter submission, against every wish of her own heart, and the experience of the whole world, from the very reason that it is not "first love"—a makeshift sentimentality lavished upon the individual of the opposite sex, whether long, short, dark or fair, Falstaffian or "lean and hungry," like Cassius, who makes eyes at us, and talks the unutterable nonsense just at the proper time in our lives—and because it is given without hope, lighter fancies she had had, wherein the froth of her nature had all effervesced—mayhap deadening some of its fire into bitter ashes; but the smothered flame fanned by a master hand into life again, burst beyond all control, because she knew that for her there could be "no hope," as we have said.

It is only in a man's early years that he defies every other consideration but his own impulse, and she felt instinctively that Earle Templeton's life, like Caesar's, must "not only be innocent, but above suspicion." Hence when she had said good-night that night, she believed that when his footsteps died away, she should never look upon his face again, unless by the merest chance; and the questioning, speechless woe of face and eyes, had wrung his strong nature with a pang he should not soon forget, and he was not in the best of humor with himself or the world generally, when he had passed from her presence into the hushed quiet of the night.

As he reached the little gate a heavy hand was placed upon his shoulder. It was a hand that had in its touch something undisguisedly menacing, and he swung round fiercely.

"Who are you?"

"George Worthington."

"Ah, Colonel, coming out from the light, I did not recognize you. Ah, you going down street?"

"Only a few paces with you. You are not a coward as well as a villain, Earle Templeton."

"By heavens, George Worthington, either epithet applied to me, would leave you no option but to try me on the former."

"This is what I had supposed, and therefore I defer settling with you until morning, in the assurance that you will be found. A friend will wait on you at any place you shall appoint, at sunrise."

Templeton's indignation was aroused. "My chambers adjoin my office."

"So I have been informed."

"Your tone and manner, Colonel Worthington, leave me no room to doubt the nature of that friend's visit," replied Templeton, calmly, so far as any one could be calm.

"May I, however, presume to inquire into the cause?"

"You may, though I think you might dispense with that, and as I have no time to answer supererogatory questions, I will bid you good-night. And Colonel Worthington turned on his heel and strode away."

"It is this affair with Miss Worthington beyond all doubt," thought Templeton, as he too moved on. The question was needless. And the same doubly-damned villain who has been writing to Juan Alvarez at the bottom of this. The note which this unfortunate girl received was only a stratagem to throw stronger—nay, irresistible suspicion around me, and thus bring her brother and myself into collision. By heavens, had it been legal or other matter that I might partly have forgotten, I should not have been able to swear but it was my own writing."

"No wonder Violetta was deceived. And yet she should have known me better. Who can it be? His suspicious naturally merged at once to Lieutenant Masters, the sickly young man who had once warned him to discontinue his attentions to Miss Worthington."

"He is incapable of the clever counterfeits," he muttered, "but he has money at command, and accomplishes what he readily fends. What reason the wisp must have too, that he would not only provoke a serious difficulty between the brother and myself, but must endeavor to thwart me elsewhere. Would not he have desired though, that I should succeed with Miss Alvarez? Yet, if Masters be out of the question, who can it possibly be?"

Not once in all his speculations had that terrible vow of vengeance, under the lineaments of W., from the white lips of a broken-hearted woman, occurred to him. Whenever the remembrance of Carroll Tremayne came back to him, and when was it that it did not?—there was a thrill of fierce satisfaction that he had done all in human power to avenge him. After the self-destruction of the murderer, some very readable romance articles coupled with the recollection of Jones, had appeared in several papers, declaring that after all, the affair was involved in inexplicable mystery, and that perhaps the one innocent man had suffered here; but they had made not the slightest impression upon him. And thus, completely in the dark as to who his enemy and traitor could be, he wandered his way through the streets of N., and into a coffee-room in quest of James Barrycourt, whom he must seek to stand by him in the painful affair of to-morrow.

The young barrister, at his solicitation, joined him at a table, where they were to partake of refreshments, when they would adjourn to Templeton's rooms to arrange a little matter of business.

While they sat sipping their coffee, and Barrycourt had taken up a paper, Templeton was rather more reserved than usual, a second party entered and took the seats just to their left. Templeton looked up and saw Sebastian Alvarez—his companion he did not know.

The Spaniard instantly assumed a smile of withering disdain, as he glanced around; and Templeton, the better to command himself, took up a paper also. He could not turn his eyes from his companion, fix his attention upon the print.

"A striking face," he heard the stranger say, in French. "Like those we see in the old Italian paintings. Vandyke reductions."

"And yet," replied Sebastian Alvarez, slowly, and in a great deal louder tone than he was wont to speak, "it makes a low and lying nature, as you ever read of. The fellow has some reputation for talent here; and would you think it, he had the unblinking cheek to palm himself off on my father, in his ignorance of this swinish country and its people, as a person of noble connections and expectations; when he comes from a stock of murderers, thieves, and no one knows what. His name is Earle Templeton."

"Confound him and puppy," cried Templeton, swinging round like a panther—all the dark, swift passion of his nature now thoroughly aroused—his eyes gleaming like steel, "no man ever copies Earle Templeton's name with so malicious a falsehood, and lives; and he flung his glass to the other's teeth.

Barrycourt and the stranger had turned in amazement.

"Fable poco y bien tenete las por alquien," said Alvarez, in Spanish, as he rang the bell. "My father employed that fellow in some low business, and I had occasion to warn him that he was inclined to display a temper and an obstinacy which would be a disgrace to him; and he ever allowed to indulge in with impunity—a gentleman and a donkey. As he is not a gentleman, you see he must be the donkey. Here, waiter—as an attendant appeared—"there is a glove, I think. Throw it on the dung-hill; and another time be cautious how you put gentlemen into a menagerie, and be prepared to scatter out."

With a sudden movement Templeton rose to his feet, and stood before him—a righteous indignation flushing his face, and fire darting from his eyes.

"Even though Nina Alvarez has promised to become my wife, I cannot submit to coarse drunken insult for the sake of her love. You are her brother; and as such ought to be a gentleman. Deny it as you will—through cowardice, or I know not what—you can not take from me that title. All N.—will corroborate my claims to it. If you refuse to accept my challenge, when you can have no grounds for doing so, I shall try my cane across your shoulders, and then kick you into the street."

"It was not enough for you to lie to my father, but you must lie about my sister, said Alvarez, fiercely, putting his hand to his pocket. "Shall I shoot you like the dog you are?"

"Stop!"

The single word was hissed on the air like a bullet.

"Draw your hand but one inch from your breast, and I shoot you where you stand. Will you give me satisfaction, as a gentleman should?"

"To another gentleman—no."

"Let me tell you of our law. Were you to shoot me here—which I have no intention you shall do, you would be hung for murder; you would not like that. You know well enough, as I said, that I am not only a gentleman, but a gentleman of position; do not wish to descend to an eating-house brawl; and you should not."

"You are then ambitious to die as a gentleman?"

"I shall never die otherwise, sir Spaniard."

"Well," replied Alvarez, with still a remarkable show of coolness, "it has been characteristic of my race to delight in bestowing princely favors. I have half a mind to gratify you."

"Your life will be the forfeit if you do not."

"Eh bien, what brutes these English are. So I must shoot you?"

"Or I you."

"Ah!" he cried, airily. "Monsieur

de Balaan, men ant, you see how wretched. Can I do otherwise?"

"I think not," replied the Frenchman, all alive at the idea of a duel. "I have heard of Monsieur Templeton as an avowed gentleman."

"You know how much honor I and my friends are disposed to do you," continued Sebastian, turning toward his adversary. "You see I am preparing to leave England in twenty-four hours. When shall it be?"

"To-morrow at ten," replied Templeton, who had recovered all his composure. "I have an engagement earlier."

"I shall be ready," said the Frenchman. "On the beach where we first met."

"At ten, then, be it. And as I am counted the best shot in Europe, I would advise you to say your prayers to-night."

With that he took the arm of Monsieur de Balaan, and stroled out as though he had just transacted the business arrangements for some pleasure excursion.

Templeton likewise soon turned homeward with Barrycourt. The surprise of the latter may be imagined at the double arrangement of his friend.

"Just Heaven!" he cried, "must you twice offer yourself as the victim of so foul a conspiracy? Who is it, in God's name, that has done this devil's work? Were I you, I would turn heaven and earth to discover the author of those letters, and bring him to punishment. I should never have dreamed but that Miss Worthington's visit of yesterday was of her own accord, or at your solicitation."

"Nor would her brother," replied Templeton. "The thought of death is not more inviting to me than to most other men, but I could not have done otherwise. But should I survive and could be possessed of millions in bank, I would cheerfully lose it all, through a forgery, to be able to come up, at last, with the man who can thus imitate my writing, and so stab me in the back."

He found a servant waiting at his door with a note. Barrycourt noticed that for the first time his hand trembled as he approached the light. The note was in the handwriting of Nina Alvarez, and ran thus:

"If you ever imagined that you had won my regard, pray do not longer indulge such a fancy. Whatever may have existed in the past, henceforth I shall regard you with loathing, and shall avoid you as I would a venomous reptile. To-morrow I hope to leave England, with all its associations of you, far behind me forever."

"NINA ALVAREZ."

Templeton crushed the note in his hand as though it had been a wasp that had stung him, and hurled it into the fire. He passed the greater part of the night in writing and in arranging his papers.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A WOUND IN THE LEFT ARM AND A BLOW ON THE RIGHT.

At sunrise Colonel Worthington's friend, Captain Neeson, presented himself at Earle Templeton's door. James Barrycourt received him with formal courtesy, and the preliminaries were soon arranged.

For the first affair, an open field a mile from town was selected, and at seven o'clock Templeton drove thither in a carriage, accompanied by Barrycourt and a surgeon.

They found Colonel Worthington, with his friends, already on the ground.

"Is there no chance for an accommodation?" asked Barrycourt.

"None," was the determined reply. And the distance was measured off.

Templeton was, as usual, very pale, but not a muscle of his face was seen to move. Colonel Worthington's brows were bent in a severe frown.

"The two were placed opposite each other and the signal arranged.

"One! Two! Three!"

As the last number was pronounced, a simultaneous report rang through the air. The momentary mist broke away, and Colonel Worthington was seen standing erect and composed. Templeton's left arm had fallen to his side, and the blood was flowing from his sleeve. The surgeon hastened to his side.

"You are wounded, Mr. Templeton."

"Yes, but I think not severely. You may stop this blood, however, before we proceed."

He had fired in the air.

The surgeon tore open his sleeve, and hastened to lave and bind up the wound.

Most men would have feared for the sake of that said, stepping back with the other parties.

Captain Neeson now advanced.

"Colonel Worthington warned his adversary not to fire in the air again. He himself would endeavor to take more effective aim than before."

"I shall be ready," answered Templeton, with a sudden look of stern determination. "I start that he might honorably escape a difficulty with the brother of Nina Alvarez by death. Now, this man's obstinacy angered him, and again the signal was given."

"One! Two!"

"Stop! In God's name, stop!"

Every man there took back in astonishment the report from whence the sound had come, and beheld Violetta Worthington, as she sprang quickly forward, and placed herself between the combatants.

"Brother!" she cried, with uplifted hands, "shoot me, if you will, I may deserve it; but do not harm one of Earle Templeton's friends. He has thought in the start that he might honorably escape a difficulty with the brother of Nina Alvarez by death. Now, this man's obstinacy angered him, and again the signal was given."

ton received, purporting to be from my friend, was a wicked forgery."

Colonel Worthington hung his head in silence.

"Come, gentlemen," said his second, "this affair being rectified, nothing remains to be done but for us to shake hands and separate. Mr. Templeton I am sure has done all that a gentleman could do. And, Colonel, the army will be on the march in an hour."

Colonel Worthington then appealed to, stepped forward.

"If I have wronged you, Mr. Templeton, I am only praying your forgiveness, and beg of all here, for the sake of this unfortunate girl, that the affair may be hushed as speedily as possible. Violetta, come; in your distant home I trust you will remember the lessons Mr. Templeton has so kindly taught you, and for the future be more cautious in your actions."

He drew her arm through his. A single sob burst from her lips as she drew her veil over her face, and turned away. Her brother hastily placed her in the carriage, and, entering himself, gave orders to the driver, and was borne quickly out of sight.

"An heroic, if erring woman," said the doctor, looking after them. "But, Mr. Templeton, come, you must drive quickly home, ere the authorities get wind of the matter. You will need further attention, too, at once." Seeing Templeton to his rooms, he commanded him to seek his bed.

"My friend," said the latter, with one of his icy, impenetrable smiles, "I have another engagement in an hour."

"But he narrated his difficulty with the Spaniard."

"Pat it off," said the surgeon, coolly. "One round at a time may, perhaps, be better."

"On the approaching occasion I may inflict one," answered Templeton, frowning darkly.

"Better for that, then, a week from now."

"Impossible, my dear doctor," replied Earle. "The party will leave the country this evening."

More coffee was drunk, and a little later he had descended to the street again, and was preparing to enter his carriage, when he felt himself detained, and turning, saw an officer of police at his side.

"What is it?"

"You are under arrest."

"For what?"

It was soon explained. Information had been lodged before the authorities of a contemplated duel between Earle Templeton, barrister-at-law, and some party or parties unknown, and he must appear before the mayor, to be bound over to keep the peace. Secretly goaded both by his fierce temper and the wound he had received, never perhaps did a man of his unflinching notions of honor so long to defy justice, but it was of no avail.

"For God's sake, Barrycourt," he whispered, "see that imperious, insolent foreigner, and explain to him my situation. I should go mad else."

His own knowledge of law and its quibbles could avail him nothing. He was solemnly sworn "to maintain and defend conditions allowed from attempting to strike, bribe or beat, or to use fire arms with intent to wound or kill any individual whatsoever, for the space of twelve months," and required to give bond and security for the same.

Worn and worried to no small extent, it was a late hour when he was permitted to take his town-hall of justice, and turn homeward. "A dark-eyed woman," he repeated, wondering, remembering the words of Violetta Worthington that morning. "Who, in heaven's name, can she be, and what is her motive?" Lost in vague and remote speculations, he had turned down a quiet street, and was pursuing his way across an open square, when he and might become cruel, even brutal in his treatment of her. His only hope was to rescue her if in danger, and restore her to those whose natural affections could be trusted.

He had had a long interview with Mrs. Thornton, and she had at last emerged from her room, her face flushed and strangely excited, and had thrown her arms about Mary's neck in a passion of weeping, and the tears had seemed to spring from a source of sincere congratulation. The one maid-servant who came every morning, looking in just then, withdrew unobserved.

She was very certain "that the doctor and Miss Mary were going to make a match soon."

Mrs. Thornton, the elder, had weepingly communicated to Dr. Chester some circumstances that had given him an insight into Lillian's motives of action, convincing him more than ever that she had not been entirely sane since her brother's death; and with this clue he had secretly set to work.

Several circumstances, however, had conspired to delay him fatally. One was that old Mrs. Thornton had been suddenly seized with a dangerous epidemic, and from the first had manifested symptoms of an aggravated kind. Abandoning every other patient, he had watched at her side night and day, with the briefest intervals of rest, for four long weeks.

At the end of that time she died. A few days later Mary Thornton had left his house, to return in a short time—the people said as his wife; but she did not come back at all. When questioned, he answered simply that she would make her home for the future with some friends at a distance.

And now he was entirely alone. He had never, however, for one moment forgotten Lillian Thornton.

Sometimes, though he too, could have no great fancy for Earle Templeton, he had dropped into the office of the latter, on one pretext or another; but he had been chilled by the reserve of the lawyer, and believing that it would be impossible for him to discover anything there, he had discontinued his visits. The last time he had gone away, Lewis Hartman had looked down upon him from the steps above, whether he had gone to fetch away the troublesome old vagrant, calling herself Mrs. North.

Had Dr. Chester stood beside Earle Templeton at the wharf on the evening the Lady Alice had sailed, he might have noticed the broad expanse of water, Mrs. North, now entirely sober, and really bearing herself in a handsome outfit like some old dowager, taking passage for foreign parts; but Dr. Chester was at the bedside of a patient.

On the day of Mrs. Thornton's burial he had been summoned by a lad to visit the daughter of a poor widow, who had been smitten with the same malarious fever.

The widow's name had been given as Mrs. Weston.

He found her with a family of five children in two small garret rooms, cleanly swept and dusted, but destitute of all furniture except two straw beds, an unvarnished table, and three old chairs.

"We had sold what we could to buy medicine, hoping to keep down the fever from the start, but they are so ill we were

after them. It was rather a good thing to the smiling spectators.

There was one carriage, however, embowed with a flaming coat of arms, with driver and footman in livery for whom there was no smile. The few persons who remained to get out of the way, while those at a safe distance craned their necks and looked eagerly to catch but one glimpse of these distinguished personages. A young man sprang first to the pave. He might be a prince of the blood for aught they knew—he was so handsomely dressed, and bore himself so proudly. Then an older man—evidently the father of the first, and lastly a graceful, veiled lady. The young lady and the old gentleman passed quickly into the boat; the young man remaining to look after the baggage. While he stood hastily giving directions, some one touched him on the arm.

"A word before you leave."

He swung round quickly and beheld Earle Templeton placid and smiling at his side.

The young man referred to was, of course, Sebastian Alvarez.

"What would you now?"

"I am bound by a pledge, and my word is my bond, or I should throw you headlong into the sea. In one year, however, I shall be free; and at the end of that time I shall find you, though you were at the antipodes."

"In the heat of passion this morning I did you a wrong. You have some bull-dog courage, but you were bound, and I was sorry afterward. Now I promise you, that though at the antipodes indeed I will turn eagerly back to meet you. Will that suffice?"

"In part. To-day is Friday—the third of May."

"Well?"

"On Saturday, the third of May, in the coming year, we must meet."

"Where?"

"That is for you to say."

"By the code of honor—no."

"Then I will appoint. I shall be in Paris. You will be there, and my address through the post office will reach you."

"Yes."

"Then at twelve o'clock I shall be free. At one I shall expect your friend."

"If I am living I shall not be disappointed. There is my card." He handed him a bit of pearl paper embossed with gilt letters, from a jeweled card-case, and turning quickly, hurried over the pontoon to the vessel.

No one had observed this brief dialogue, or would have dreamed, from the countenance of either, that they had not parted on the most amicable terms.

CHAPTER XXX.

GEORGE CHESTER'S FRIENDS.

Dr. Chester had not forgotten all the duties of life, when it seemed to him that every pleasure was dead. The night that Lillian Thornton's note had come, telling him of her marriage with another, and that other Lewis Hartman, whom he had so often met in mist and despair, he had indeed abandoned himself to a grief that had alarmed the other members of the household for his sake. But in the morning he had risen up calm and patient, and resolved to resume her still, though it should be the last act of his life.

"He has deceived her," he said over and over again, "and even in her state of mind she would abhor him if she knew all, and would come back to me."

He had no thought of her, as the old love, from that day till the end of his life. He was persuaded that her reason had been subverted, and that she was the victim of a wicked conspiracy from beginning to end. The villain who had enticed her from her friends would soon weary of her and might become cruel, even brutal in his treatment of her. His only hope was to rescue her if in danger, and restore her to those whose natural affections could be trusted.

He had had a long interview with Mrs. Thornton, and she had at last emerged from her room, her face flushed and strangely excited, and had thrown her arms about Mary's neck in a passion of weeping, and the tears had seemed to spring from a source of sincere congratulation. The one maid-servant who came every morning, looking in just then, withdrew unobserved.

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The widow's name had been given as Mrs. Weston.

He found her with a family of five children in two small garret rooms, cleanly swept and dusted, but destitute of all furniture except two straw beds, an unvarnished table, and three old chairs.

bound to send for you," said the woman, apologetically. She wanted him to understand from the beginning that he could have no hope of being paid for his services.

There were three girls and one little boy down with the fever—the oldest son alone had been left to aid the mother, and had been sent for her.

Dr. Chester took up the little flushed hands as tenderly as he would have done had they been adorned with the costliest jewels; and when he had carefully noted the symptoms of each he went away, taking the boy with him, and sent back medicines from his office.

His attentions were unrequited; but he had been called too late. The two girls whom he had found in greatest danger—they were the younger—died in an hour of each other. The mother was wild with grief. She threw herself down, tearing her hair, beside their lifeless bodies.

In the agony of this hour I invoke Heaven's curses on Lewis Hartman, the remorseless thief who defrauded us of all and turned us into the world to stars," she cried. "I know how it would be. I told that

At the child's bedside, George Chester felt his heartache and his low spirits both vanishing. When she came to go, he went out with her, and saw her home. Then he turned away, and stopping at a wood-yard ordered a cart-load of large fagots to be taken to the child's mother. At a later hour he himself drove up, and paid them a visit. He soon, however, sent the children off into the spare room, while he and the mother remained behind.

He had asked them not to interrupt him, and he felt sure that Emily could be relied on; the boys might be more curious, so he hastened to have a beautiful Christmas tree, bearing presents for each, brought up, and placed in the best light of the lamp upon the table. He added fagots to the fire until there was a great roaring blaze; and then he slipped out to send the children back. They came quickly, prattling all the while, pushed open their mother's door to go in, and stopped in breathless astonishment.

A sight of the glowing fire and the beautiful evergreen glittering with bon-bons and toys, they drew back half-frightened, expecting to behold Santa Claus face to face. Dr. Chester, however, is standing behind them—oh, in a moment Emily comprehends all. The three rush in and are half-frantic with content and thanks.

Besides the confessions, that will last them for a week, there are clothes for each of them, and a nice warm shawl for mamma. But this is not all—a strange servant comes in, after they have danced around each article until they are tired, bearing a tray upon his head. The table is pulled up, and an abundant and merry repast spread before them. They all sit down and eat, Dr. Chester in the midst, and are a truly happy group. The mother forgets her sorrow, and joins in the merriment of the little ones.

The evening had passed quickly and pleasantly, and at a late hour, Dr. Chester turned homeward with a full heart. There was only one bitter thought recurring, in the midst of his pure enjoyment; Mrs. Weston had asked him if he had ever heard anything of Lewis Hartman, and he had been forced to answer no.

He was to-day as ignorant of the whereabouts of Lillian Thornton, as he had been on that first morning of her departure, when he had still fancied her in the room but a few feet from his own.

Hartman had seen the notice of Mrs. Thornton's illness, which had been published by Dr. Chester, in the rain hope that through such means Lillian might be brought back. The former had carefully kept the papers out of her sight. He had shown her the one containing the notice of her mother's death.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ANOTHER VISIT TO COLDHAM.

Earle Templeton was started out of the hum-drum round of his professional duties one chill autumn morning, by the unwelcome apparition of Mr. Horace Eglington in his doorway.

He had seen Mr. Eglington but once or twice since that memorable day in the beginning of this story, when the latter had solemnly said his beautiful daughter before the altar of God, to Carroll Trevelyan for gold; and then only when a meeting could not possibly be avoided.

If there could be one thing above all others irritating to Earle Templeton's proud nature, it had always been to have his personal feelings probed, his personal matters touched by any other—no matter how congenial, in the general sense of the term, that other might be; but to be read, and perhaps pitted by the man before him—the man who had remorselessly blighted his life, and for whom he must ever have an undying contempt, even after all hatred had perished—was more than he had been able to bear. And hence, though he would scarce have been willing to confess it to himself, Mr. Eglington, with the soft whine in his voice, and the slippery polish of his manners, was the only man living whom he carefully and persistently avoided. It may then at once be imagined, that to the hero of this story, the visitor thus intruding was by no means a welcome one.

"Pray excuse this intrusion, Mr. Templeton," he began at once, as he seated himself in the chair to which the other had motioned with his hand, "but really I could not do otherwise than come to you. You know that I took my daughter abroad after that most barbarous murder of her husband, and that I have done everything possible for her comfort and happiness."

He, the miserable, lying hypocrite! The muscles of the usually inflexible mouth before him gave a slight twitch, but the speaker did not change in look or voice.

"Well, Mr. Templeton, she—I mean Floy, of course—has never recovered from the shock, and I have now to hope that she will. I am sure that her physicians pronounce her worse than she really is; but last night she was a great deal worse than she has ever been, and they declared her worse ill. In fact, my darling child imagines that she is dying, and she has sent me to implore you to come to her for a few moments before she leaves the care of this world behind her forever," and Mr. Eglington wiped his eyes on his kerchief of soft white silk.

"Where is she?" asked Earle Templeton, in a low voice.

"At Coldham," he answered, pettishly. "Of all places in the world the one that must affect her worst. It is only very recently I am afraid since they have had no hope—that her physicians would consent to bring her there; she—she has sent you this," and he handed Templeton, as it at first appeared, an empty sealed envelope. The latter tore it open, and found a bit of paper with these words traced upon it in an almost illegible hand:

"I have only a few hours to live or I could not send for you even now; but in death I have always promised myself that you would see me again. You will not deny me this, I know. Come at once, or you will be too late, and I shall go to my grave, feeling that you have been more unkind than I ever could have been to you."

When Templeton looked up, Mr. Eglington had averted his face. The former took out his watch.

"We shall barely be in time for the train," he said.

He did not speak again on the journey, unless in answer to some question, and then his responses were in monosyllables.

The old depot at Coldham—the old walk up to the grand house to which Ralph Thornton had gone in the unclouded freshness of his bright manhood rather more than a year previous—and again the dead leaves whirled and danced as Earle Templeton's feet as they had done at his—through the dark-valet entrance, up the softly-carpeted stairway, into a dimly-lighted chamber—her chamber. And the woman lay there to whom he had given all the delicious love of his young manhood.

"Earle!"

death; but the voice, even now, had all the old, soft winning music of her girlish days; and it spoke to him as the heart.

"Earle!" she murmured again. "Ah! you are here! I knew you would come. Papa—dear, you will leave the room, and take them all out? I want to talk to him alone—just a few moments, you know. There can be nothing wrong in that now."

Oh, no! nothing wrong now or evermore.

The hard, worldly heart of the old man was melted now, and he went out with a choking sob, beckoning the attendants to follow.

"Oh! speak to me, Earle," faltered the dying woman. "There is such a short time left to me now. Let me but hear you call my name—as you used to do?"

He stood with folded arms, looking down at her. The stern armor which he had put on had not yet been pierced, even by the sword of Death before him.

"That is changed, too, Mrs. Trevelyan," he said.

Even in her great weakness she lifted the little waxen hands deprecatingly.

"Do not—oh, do not call me that. Let me be the Florence of old—your Florence, for the one hour of life that is left to me."

"The Florence of old!" he repeated, bitterly. "How can you ask that, when you know that she died to me forever more than a year ago in the church at N—?"

"Would to Heaven she had died to all the world in very truth before this day," she cried.

"Oh, Earle Templeton, you have been free—you could not suffer as I have done."

"You left me of your own free will and accord," he cried out, bitterly. "You deceived as true a man as ever lived—you embittered my manhood and blighted my whole life. What more would you ask?"

"Your pity," she replied. "Oh, Earle, it was not of my own accord. I was young and thoughtless then, but I have loved you always. My life has been a cruel mistake. I knew that even at the altar, when I looked up and beheld you for one instant, where you had come to see me married, I knew it more bitterly every hour of my life afterwards. He was so true and tender and noble, too, Earle, that it made existence a cruel torment to me."

Do you remember that day you came here with his friends after—he had come back, because you were too proud to stay away? I thought I should go mad when I first beheld you. You talked so grandly, so brilliantly at dinner, that all were amazed; but I saw that you, too, had suffered."

"My God, spare me!" he cried, in agonized remembrance. "hear me still. All my life then was a stupendous, mocking lie. Do you think the wealth lavished upon me could have been anything but an aggravation? Strive to hide it as they would, they who had persuaded me to it, saw, when too late, that it was only that. But we will not blame them now. Let all the fault be mine, for I have bitterly atoned, darling, do not turn away—let me say that once to you who have suffered so much. You spoke to me so harshly that day, but it only showed me more than ever that a hero—a king amongst men—was you."

"Hush! oh, God, hush!" It was his turn to plead now. "If you had but dreamed how I longed—Again he broke off, unable to proceed."

"Longed for what?" she asked, eagerly. "My soul hungers for one kind word from you. Tell it me, darling."

"How I longed, then and there, false though you had been, to clasp you in my arms, and let them find us thus in my mad joy, and say to both, 'he cried, hoarsely; and then his bowed head went down on the bed-clothes, and his frame shook with the strong man's passionate weeping."

"Oh, not dead to him yet—no dead to him yet," as he knew now, was this pale, beautiful woman, over whom the shadows of the end were falling fast.

"I am so glad to hear you say that!" she went on after a little, putting on one delicate weak hand to stroke his dark curls. "It is dreadfully wicked, I know, but I can't help it, and there is so little time for us to be together now."

"No little time!" he repeated imperiously, lifting his head with the old proud gesture, as though his simple dad could command life or death. "My Florence! my soul's idol! you are free now, and we will never part. You are pale, darling, but my kisses will bring the color back to your cheeks."

"And yet, Earle, do you remember that we have never kissed each other?" she said, while a faint flush came back over her face, and gave her all the old girlish beauty. "Nay, not now," she continued, while the tender hand was laid on his lips this time. "It was my fault, dear. I sent you away, you know, and you would not be here now, but that the end is so near."

"What end, my beloved?" he still asked, incredulously, for he loved her once more, and in that love he was forgetting that she had ever been the wife of another.

"Death!"

"No, no," he cried. "Fate shall not snatch you from me now. We have both passed through a fiery ordeal, and in the dress of our natures has all been consumed. And with our affections strengthened tenfold, how pure will we be in our joy!—how blissful in a supreme content of which the envious world shall seek to deprive us in vain!"

"Hush, darling! That is so much like your old, boyish, impetuous self. It is indeed all over with me, Earle, or I shouldn't have you here even now. I owed that much to my husband, and I was determined to pay it all, since I could not give him even a corner of my heart. After his cruel death, I used to wonder sometimes whether if we were to meet again, you would come back to me. I knew I loved you, but I should have sent you away still. I swore that at his disappearance, and I would have kept my vow at any cost to us both. But you would not have come back to me, Earle, would you?"

"If I had seen you in health, never," he answered, earnestly, "though you had come to me on your knees every day for the rest of our lives. Now, my own, your pale, sick face conquers me, and I shudder to think what I might have lost through my old, accursed obstinacy."

"Lost either way, Earle," she answered, "though you can never know how glad I am that it is as it is. We may not be too happy here, and indulgence like this is only granted to dying people."

"Oh, my darling! don't talk like that. You wounded my heart cruelly once. You will break it beyond all power of mending now," he answered, passionately. "You cannot die. I would give my life to have you but for one day."

"Hush, dear enthusiast. I used to call you that, you know," she faltered, her voice growing every moment weaker. "Now listen, Earle: there is scarcely time, and while I have the strength, I have a solemn charge to lay upon you. I have a little daughter four months old now. I see you start, you were thinking of me as the Florence Eglington of our happier days; but the voice, even now, had all the old, soft winning music of her girlish days; and it spoke to him as the heart."

"Earle!" she murmured again. "Ah! you are here! I knew you would come. Papa—dear, you will leave the room, and take them all out? I want to talk to him alone—just a few moments, you know. There can be nothing wrong in that now."

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days—well, I can scarcely realize it any more than you, for the doctors here kept it from me nearly all the while, because I was so weak. Now, Earle, it seems like a cruel thing for a dying child to say of a parent, but I do not want my father to bring her up. We know how all feeling would be blunted, and how worldly he would make her. I have told him so in all kindness, though I hope my sad fate may soften his heart. No, Earle, I have left it in writing, and he knows it, that I want you to have entire control of her, from the day she is six years old. You must bring her up, and have her educated, and let her live with you then, until you can conscientiously give her to some true man who loves her, and whom she loves. You will promise me this, Earle?"

"Oh, Florence, yes!"

"He would have wished it so, I know," she went on, fainter and fainter. "He used to talk so much about you, Earle, without dreaming how every word found an echo in my heart. I am so glad he never guessed. He was your best friend."

"I know, Oh, God, I know!"

"Then you will promise me again to watch over his child; to rear it very tenderly?"

"I promise," he still sobbed, for his strong nature was the weaker of the two now. "And may Heaven judge me as I shall endeavor to perform my duty faithfully; but I would to God, Florence, that I were dying with you!"

"Hush! Don't say that. What would become of her? Besides, you are still young and strong. There is a long life before you with plenty of work to do, and great glory for you to win. And, who knows? you may then love some pretty and good woman, who will be far worthier of you than I could ever have been."

"Oh, Florence! there never could be another like you were, my darling! my darling!"

"It is so good in you to say so, Earle; but women pass you every day, dear, in the streets of our native town, fairer and better—oh, much better than I!"

"I never see them," he answered truthfully. "They have no beauty for me, because they are not you."

"Oh, wonderful, divine mystery of love!" she cried, after a pause, "it is only for a time, dear. You come to me then. I am sure that our Saviour has seen and freely forgiven all. Promise me that you will try to come."

"Florence, I have been fearfully wicked sometimes; too wicked I fear ever to get to Heaven. If I should try, darling, it would only be for you."

"Raise me just a little then. Ah, so! Now say the Lord's Prayer with me, Earle."

The gray shadows were creeping over her. He saw that she was drifting rapidly away from him, out into the dark waters of death, where he could not go, and he caught her frantically to his breast, as though his love must keep her back. His arms were clasped about her wasted form, and with his face pressed to hers, he went through the prayer they had each been taught from their infancy to say apart, but never until now together. When it was ended they each lay for a moment still as though death had claimed both. She was the first to speak.

"Now sit by me, Earle, and lift me a little in your arms. Ah, so! but I am drifting, drifting away. And then he lay down as though she were falling asleep. He bent his face to hers and whispered—

"Florence!"

It would seem as though his voice had power to call her back from the very portals of death. The brown eyes, so beautiful yet, unclouded, and the ghost of a smile played upon her lips.

"It is not Mrs.—that other name, now," she said.

"No, darling. It is no treason to him at this hour. You were his life, but you are mine in death. Call me 'husband,' only once before you go."

"Husband," she whispered, the smile deepening into an irradiation. "Yes, my husband in spirit and in truth, though our communion has been but of souls. Now kiss me, Earle, only once, and let me fall asleep upon your breast."

"Hush! hush!" he found her, half an hour afterwards, when the other watchers, alarmed at the unbroken silence, came back into the room.

She had "fallen asleep upon his breast."

(To be continued in our next, Commenced in No. 16.)

The Story of the Alice Waltz.

BY EREN E. REXFORD.

Sensations were something like angel visits in St. John's—very few and far between. Sometimes a breeze blew in from the great outside world and made a little ripple on the surface of society, and people went about for a few days, talking of the matter which had stirred them, but a little of their usual repose. I think that last word is the proper one to use in this connection. The St. Johnites prided themselves on their Sleepy-Hollow way of living, and to use a stronger term than the one I have, would be sure to bring down upon me the indignation of the worthy people of that pretty place. Sometimes an event occurred, among themselves which for a few days, and then they went on as it had been going before the little social whirlwind came to set the atmosphere of St. John society in brisker motion than usual.

St. John's had a new sensation when old Mr. Gray suddenly resigned his position as organist in St. John's church. He had occupied his position there for many years, and people had come to regard him as a fixture, so to speak. Accordingly, when he announced that he was going away from St. John's, and that the trustees of the church had better be looking about for some one to fill his place, people wondered somewhat as to what his motive could be in leaving them, and more as to who would be chosen as his successor.

It was understood after a little while that a new organist had been engaged. A young man from the city, who was fitting himself for a teacher in some musical establishment, the trustees said, in answer to the questions propounded to them.

Of course there was a great flutter among the young ladies of St. John's. A handsome young organist would be a decided acquisition, everybody declared. Of course he was handsome. It would not be according to the eternal fitness of things if he wasn't.

The pretty little church was crowded on the first Sunday of his appearance. Alice Cramer, as she stood before her glass that morning, getting ready for church, had thought of the new organist, and put a spray of white roses and half-opened buds among her soft, wavy brown hair. She sang in the choir, and if he should be as handsome as Letty Thorpe, who sang also, had declared he ought to be, she wanted to look her best.

The new organist was there when she entered the organ-loft. Alice gave him a quick glance, as she took her place beside

Letty, and saw that he was not handsome in the general acceptance of the term. But he had beautiful eyes, she concluded, so he lifted them to hers for a moment, and they made up fully for the beauty his features might lack.

"He isn't the least bit like what I expected," whispered Letty. "Not the very least; but I think he's nice-looking after all, don't you?"

"Yes, quite," answered Alice, and then Mr. Green, who sang tenor, introduced her to Mr. Letty, presenting her as "the best soprano in St. John's." Of course, being a modest young lady, Alice blushed, and the new organist gave her a very earnest glance of admiration; which was no more than many of the St. John's young men had done, for Alice was one of the stars of St. John's aristocracy, and a face like hers was sure to call forth admiration wherever it was seen. A true, pure face it was, with a clear beauty in it, like a star's.

The church was filling rapidly, and the organist began a voluntary. A ripple of pleased surprise ran over the congregation as he struck the opening chords. It was very different from Mr. Gray's playing. There was something about it that indicated a thorough comprehension of what he was doing, and that he had put himself into the spirit which the piece demanded to be rendered properly. The old organ seemed suddenly to have shaken off its drowsiness and renewed its youth. The rich, full, mellow harmonies filled the church, and sweetened away from the air of the still, beautiful morning, as if they were the voices of angels praising God.

"Isn't it just splendid," whispered Letty, in a flutter of pleasure. "Don't you think it is, Alice?"

"It is very beautiful," answered Alice, softly. The grand, full chords seemed in perfect harmony with the peace that was in her heart that morning.

Mr. Letty's first Sabbath as organist of St. John's church was very successful in winning him the favor of the congregation. His style was so far superior to Mr. Gray's that the more aristocratic portion wondered how they could have been content with that worthy gentleman's indifferent accomplishments. The trustees shook hands together, and congratulated themselves on their good luck in securing so satisfactory a person, at the church door, when services were over; and other members of the congregation whispered together about the music, and cast glances at the organ-loft as they lingered in the aisles while the closing piece was being played.

"I shall be pleased to have you call," Alice said, as she left the church with Letty. "The St. Johnites are quite a musical people, Mr. Letty, and I trust we shall be able to make your stay among us a pleasant one."

"Thank you," he answered, "I have no doubt of it. I shall accept your invitation to call, as I want to get acquainted with the people as soon as possible. It seems like being at sea, or in a desert when one is in a place where he knows no one well enough to call him his friend."

"I understand you," she answered. "Let me see—Tuesday—Wednesday. Can you come to tea Wednesday evening? I will have a few young people there, and will promise to get you acquainted with them."

"I will come, and thank you," he said, smiling. Alice thought him handsome when he smiled. It transfigured his plain face.

And Wednesday evening a very pleasant little circle gathered at Mr. Cramer's, and after tea there was some very good music in the parlor. Mr. Letty played the piano beautifully. As he struck the closing measure of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata, a new idea occurred to Alice. She had not kept up her music of late and was getting considerably out of practice in consequence. What she needed was a teacher, who could see where her difficulties came in, and who could help her in avoiding the many musical shoals and quicksands which beset the student. Why couldn't she get Mr. Letty to help her?

And acting up to her usual standard of promptness, Alice asked Mr. Letty about the matter the very evening.

He would be glad to give her lessons, he said. Indeed, he was intending to form a class in St. John's. He wanted his time fully occupied. So it was settled that he was to come twice a week all through the summer.

The next Monday the lessons began. The hour or two at the piano seemed very short, very pleasant to Alice. With Mr. Letty for a teacher the study of music, which she had acquired new beauty and lost all the old-time unpleasantness. There was no drudgery about it now.

Mr. Cramer looked in upon them once in a while, but never to stay long. He cared but little for music, and was never very social, and so Alice and Mr. Letty's life came to her. There are times in the lives of all when the one grand dream of loving comes to us; the sweetest, best dream of all the dreams we ever know, and some of us wake to a beautiful reality, and some of us to a bitter sense of loss and disappointment.

Alice had never loved any man. She had had an ideal, and her heart had kept itself for his coming. When Letty came, she felt a restfulness she had not known before. She was content. Sometimes she wondered why it was that the old vague restlessness was gone from her. But when he told her that he loved her, she knew all. It was the peace of love that had come to still the longings and the restlessness of her never known.

I think Letty loved her from the first. He saw in her a woman with a sweet and womanly soul, with a tender and trusting heart, and he felt that it would be safe for any man to give his happiness into her keeping. She would never betray the trust.

The summer days went by, and in their coming and their going these two learned the most beautiful lesson of life from the great and universal teacher we call Love.

One day he brought her a piece of music in manuscript.

"I have been trying my hand at composing," he said, as he unrolled the sheets, and placed them on the piano.

"The Alice Waltz," she read, as she stood beside him. "Did you name it for me?"

"Yes, I named it for you," he answered, smiling up into her face. "And I wrote it for you; listen."

He began playing. It was a tender, passionate poem in melody; it seemed to Alice, as she listened, that a thought ran through it from beginning to end, and that thought was—"I love you. I love you."

And it sang itself over and over in the slow, sweet measure of the melody. It seemed to her as if his soul was speaking to her through it.

"Do you like it?" he asked, as the last low chord died into silence.

"Oh, so much!" she answered. "It is very beautiful; and her face was bright and her eyes were tender. "I think you

more than I can tell for it. You must teach it to me."

"Alice!" he rose suddenly from the piano, and took her hands in his. Her heart fluttered like a bird's. It told her what was coming.

"Alice, my darling, the waltz told you what I tried to make it?" His voice was low and tender, and his face was transfigured by that sweet, grave smile of his. Did you understand it, Alice?"

"I think I did," she answered softly, and lifted her eyes shyly to his for a moment.

"And may I hope?" His face and voice were full of eagerness. "Do you love me, Alice?"

For answer she gave him a smile that told him what no words could have done, a glad, bright smile that was only a reflection from the sunshine in her heart, and he understood her.

"God bless you, darling," he said tenderly, and kissed her.

When Letty stood before Mr. Cramer and told him that he loved his daughter, the old man heard him through in silence, as he saw his face was purple with passion.

"And I am to understand you have her, when Letty had done, 'that you have presumption, the impudence, sir, to ask my consent to your marriage with my daughter?'"

"I love your daughter," Letty answered proudly, stung by the old man's words. "I am not aware that there is either presumption or impudence in my telling you so."

"And my answer is just this," cried the old man, in a sudden burst of rage and anger. "If you don't leave my house immediately, I'll have you put out of it! Do you hear, sir? And if you ever dare to speak to Alice again, I'll horsewhip you, sir, like a dog. Do you know what you are, sir? Merely a fortune-hunter, an adventurer! Don't say a word!—as Letty attempted to speak—"I won't listen to you. Be so kind as to go, Mr. Letty, and be sure you never darken my doors again."

Letty turned away with a white, set face, and left the room without a word.

He found Alice in the parlor.

"It is all over," he said. "Your father ordered me out of the house, and called me a fortune-hunter, and threatened to horsewhip me if ever I spoke to you again. The young man's face was pale with passion."

"Oh, Robert, Robert!" she cried, faint and sick. "And this is the end of it all, and I loved you so."

"This is the end of it all, unless—"

He stopped suddenly. "I have no right to ask you to leave your father," he added, presently. "We can wait, darling, until he is dead, and then I'll be free."

"But he will never change his mind," she answered. "I know him too well for that. His will is the only law he knows. Oh, Robert, Robert!"

She leaned her head upon his shoulder, and wept bitterly. The dream had come to an end; and it had been so sweet to dream! He put his arms about her as if to keep her. God knows it was hard to let her go.

There was a step at the door, and they looked up to see her father there. His face was livid with rage as he saw them.

"Alice," he cried hoarsely, "leave the room. I forbid you to speak to him again. Do you hear? If you do I will turn you from my doors. Remember that. And you, sir, go!"

He fairly choked with passion, and could not go on.

"I am going," answered Letty, as he bent and kissed Alice for the last time.

"God bless you, darling," he whispered, "I will never forget you," and then he unclasped her arms from his neck, and went out like one walking in a dream. He never looked at the passion-purged face in the door as he passed it. He only saw the face of his lost love, white with pain and wet with tears.

overcome.
[Several letters are held over to be answered in
our next.]